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IN THE CLAIMS

1-20. (canceled).

21. (new) An intervertebral spacer device comprising:

first and second plates disposed in a spaced apart relationship such that an inner surface of said first plate faces an inner surface of said second plate;

a semispherical protuberance projecting from the inner surface of one of said first and second plates;

a wave washer disposed between the inner surfaces of said first and second plates for counteracting compressive loads applied to said first and second plates, said wave washer having a central bore forming a curvate socket, wherein said semispherical protuberance is insertable into the curvate socket so that said first and second plates are rotatable and angulatable relative to one another.

- 22. (new) The device as claimed in claim 21, wherein said semispherical protuberance is radially inwardly deflectable in response to a radially inwardly directed force.
- 23. (new) The device as claimed in claim 22, wherein said semispherical protuberance is insertable into the curvate socket only when radially inwardly deflected.
- 24. (new) The device as claimed in claim 22, further comprising a deflection preventing element insertable into an axial bore formed in said semispherical protuberance to prevent said semispherical protuberance from deflecting inwardly.

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25. (new) The device as claimed in claim 24, wherein said semispherical protuberance comprises at least one radial slot.

- 26. (new) The device as claimed in claim 21, wherein said wave washer is selected from the group consisting of a ring-shaped wave washer, a spiral-shaped wave washer, a conical-shaped wave washer, and a semispherical-shaped wave washer.
- 27. (new) The device as claimed in claim 21, wherein said wave washer has an outer edge that extends around said central bore of said wave washer.
- 28. (new) The device as claimed in claim 27, wherein said wave washer comprises a plurality of waves, each said wave having a length that extends from said central bore to said outer edge of said wave washer.
- 29. (new) The device as claimed in claim 28, wherein at least one of said waves has a depth that varies along the length thereof between said central bore and said outer edge of said wave washer.
- 30. (new) The device as claimed in claim 28, wherein at least one of said waves has a depth that is uniform along the length thereof between said central bore and said outer edge of said wave washer.
- 31. (new) The device as claimed in claim 28, wherein at least one of said waves has a width that varies along the length thereof between said central bore and said outer edge of said wave washer.

- 32. (new) The device as claimed in claim 28, wherein at least one of said waves has a width that is uniform along the length thereof between said central bore and said outer edge of said wave washer.
- 33. (new) The device as claimed in claim 21, wherein at least one of said waves has a circumferential extent that is radially wavy.
- 34. (new) The device as claimed in claim 21, wherein said wave washer has at least one concentric groove.
- 35. (new) The device as claimed in claim 34, wherein the at least one concentric groove has a depth and a width, and wherein at least one of the width and the depth varies along a length of the concentric groove.
- 36. (new) The device as claimed in claim 21, wherein said wave washer has a circumferential extent having at least one radially extending wave valley having a depth and a width that radially varies.
 - 37. (new) An artificial intervertebral disc comprising:

first and second plates disposed in a spaced apart relationship, said first and second plates having inner surfaces that confront one another and outer surfaces that face away from one another;

a semispherical protuberance projecting from the inner surface of said first plate, wherein said semispherical protuberance is radially inwardly deflectable in response to a radially inwardly directed force;

a wave washer disposed between the inner surfaces of said first and second plates for counteracting compressive loads applied to said first and second plates, said wave washer having a central bore forming a curvate socket, wherein said semispherical protuberance is insertable into the curvate socket so that said first and second plates are rotatable and angulatable relative to one another.

- 38. (new) The device as claimed in claim 37, wherein said semispherical protuberance has an axial bore, said device further comprising a deflection preventing element insertable into the axial bore to prevent said semispherical protuberance from deflecting inwardly.
- 39. (new) The device as claimed in claim 38, wherein said semispherical protuberance is insertable into the curvate socket only when radially inwardly deflected.
- 40. (new) The device as claimed in claim 37, wherein said wave washer is selected from the group consisting of a ring-shaped wave washer, a spiral-shaped wave washer, a conical-shaped wave washer, and a semispherical-shaped wave washer.